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Opening Statement

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this important hearing regarding the environmental impact of mismanaged electronic waste exports. This is a serious problem that deserves our attention given the size and scope of the issue. With personal electronics ever more common in our lives, it is critical that industry and government work together to develop a system for end-of-product-life management that not only protects the environment but boosts manufacturing.

Stopping the illegal export of hazardous electronic wastes must be addressed through stronger enforcement actions by regulatory agencies than is currently being done. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) report offers a stark view of the consequences of unregulated exports of hazardous electronic waste. I call on the Administration to do its utmost to ensure that broken cathode ray tube (CRT) televisions are not exported without the proper notification and consent.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe that the most effective way of preventing the illegal export of hazardous electronic waste is by partnering with industry to remove the excess supply of such waste from the marketplace. It is important to recognize that if handled correctly, electronic waste can be recycled and reused effectively. For example, both Dell and Hewlett-Packard have programs that allow consumers to dispose of unwanted computers, monitors, and other electronic products. These manufacturers have created a system to safely refurbish or recycle electronic waste. Both companies utilize accredited facilities to reduce unwanted electronics to their component parts so that valuable commodities can be reused. In 2007, Dell reported that it safely recycled 102 million pounds of equipment.

As a champion of American manufacturing, I believe it is our duty to partner with the hardworking men and women who make these products to find commonsense solutions to dispose of electronic waste. Some proposals outlined in the GAO report, while well intentioned, may do little to ensure the proper management of electronic waste while adversely hurting the manufacturing industry. For example, by expanding the definition of "hazardous" to include all

electronic products that pose even a remote risk when disassembled will do little to ensure these products are not mismanaged overseas. However, it will ensure that additional costs are added to the manufacturing, transport, and marketing costs of these products.

Enforcing the CRT rule is a more effective mean to prevent export of hazardous electronic waste than the creation of more complicated regulation. Last July, I introduced the *Export Controls Improvement Act* (H.R. 6828) with Representatives Brad Sherman and Adam Smith to strengthen controls on sensitive exports while allowing legitimate trade to flow uninhibited across borders. If passed, this legislation will ensure that freight forwarders and other exporters have access to a comprehensive electronic system that cross references their shipment manifests with a government managed list of prohibited or controlled export products. The Automated Export System (AES), which already exists today, holds tremendous potential for enforcement of the CRT rule. For example, the AES system can be programmed to flag shipments of CRT products for further inspection by Customs and Border Patrol agents. Thus, it would become more difficult to circumvent American export laws if H.R. 6828 becomes law.

Encouraging developing nations to adopt better waste management and environmental regulations must also be a priority in addressing the impact of e-waste. Since a comprehensive ban on all electronic waste exports is unrealistic and counterproductive, it is incumbent upon the Administration to engage foreign governments to stop abusive practices. For example, Chinese authorities must do more to end the open burning of electronic waste to recover commodity parts. Just as in the climate change debate, developing countries must also contribute their fair share to protect the environment. Even membership in the Basel Convention on Hazardous Waste has done little to encourage countries like China and India to crackdown on polluters.

With regard to the Basel Convention, it is important to point out that the United States ratified the convention 16 years ago, but has not acceded to the Convention because implementing legislation has not passed. Hopefully, this can be changed in the 111th Congress. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that there are faster ways to deal with the scourge of hazardous electronic waste exports. We can act now and effectively by passing AES reform.

Again, thank you and I look forward to the testimony of the witnesses.